

REMARKS

In response to the non-final office action of September 27, 2006, applicant asks that all claims be allowed in view of the amendment to the claims and the following remarks.

Claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-15, 17-21, 23 and 24 are currently pending, of which claims 1, 7, 13 and 19 are independent. Claims 1, 7, 13 and 19 have been amended to include the subject matter of claims 4, 10, 16 and 22, and claims 4, 10, 16 and 22 have been cancelled. No new matter has been added.

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 4, 10, 16 and 22 would be allowable if written in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 18, 19, 21 and 24 have been rejected as unpatentable over Yamazaki (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0006827)¹ in view of Peng (U.S. Patent No. 6,641,674). Claims 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20 and 23 have been rejected as unpatentable over Yamazaki in view of Peng and Yamamoto (U.S. Patent No. 6,179,923). Applicant requests withdrawal of these rejections in view of the amendment of the independent claims to include the subject matter of allowable claims 4, 10, 16 and 22.

Applicant submits that all claims are in condition for allowance.

It is believed that all of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this reply should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this reply, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

¹ Although the rejection indicates that the rejection is over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0006827 to "Van Slyke," applicant understands the rejection to be over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0006827 to "Yamazaki" as indicated elsewhere in the action.

Pursuant to 37 CFR §1.136, applicant hereby petitions that the period for response to the action dated September 27, 2006, be extended for one month to and including January 27, 2007.

The fee in the amount of \$120.00 in payment for the Petition for Extension of Time fee is being paid concurrently herewith on the Electronic Filing System (EFS) by way of Deposit Account authorization. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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Barbara A. Benoit
Reg. No. 54,777

Customer No.: 26171
Fish & Richardson P.C.
1425 K Street, N.W.
11th Floor
Washington, DC 20005-3500
Telephone: (202) 783-5070
Facsimile: (202) 783-2331